

"THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."—CHRIST.

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## ONE WOMAN'S MISSION.

BY WILLIAM MITCHELL.

"The darkest night that clouds the sky  
Of beauty has a share;  
The blackest heart has signs to tell  
That God still lingers there."—*Nichols.*

I WAS seated in my home, when a knock came to the door, and to my summons of "Come in," a little curly-headed fellow entered, and in breathless haste exclaimed, "Please, sir, you are to come—Tom is nearly dead."

I had been expecting this for some time, and yet now it had come, a chill struck through my heart. I lived a mile and a-half away from Tom's house. I lost no time, but hastened away over the fields my nearest way from my home. To wander in those fields had been my delight since childhood. This was a scene to rejoice the heart of the lover of nature in any season of the year. I can describe it now, and realize it to my mind, for I had enjoyed it hundreds of times, and have often done since, with a never abating zest, though I am far away from it; but on that bright summer day, with a cloudless sky above me, I thought not of it, noticed it not, as I passed through it; for my heart was filled with the thought-devouring feeling that I was going to lose a dear and valued friend. Let me tell the story of his life.

In the little town of Stoneleyfield, from about 1825, there was a wild little vagabond running about the streets. Where he came from no one knew, nor could he tell himself. He had no home; he slept in the stables and haylofts of the various public-houses; ran errands, held gentlemen's horses; and in short

did everything. He was rewarded with broken victuals, odd halfpence, often with a kick or a curse. He was dirty, bare-headed, bare-legged, and impudent. He had got the name of Tom Lost. In a few years it was found that he had a good voice, so he was often cleaned up on Saturday nights, by the publican, and taken into his bar-parlour to sing some vile song for his best customers. His Saturday evenings earnings were generally gambled away in "pitch and toss," on the Sundays, in some dark back alley.

And thus the years rolled on, and Tom grew up amidst the worst circumstances that could possibly surround him. He became the terror of the whole neighbourhood, for he was tall as a life-guardsmen, and strong as a horse, possessed of all the wild, untrained passions of the savage. He was so fierce in his temper that even the professional blackguards of the prize-ring could make nothing of him. In an encounter with "Brasse," Tom, by the sheer force of his vast animal strength, had nearly ended the days of that famous hero.

When Tom was, as near as one could guess, about twenty years of age, there came to live in Stoneleyfield a young woman of the name of Martha. Her parents were natives, and had, as many others had done, gone to a large town a little distance from the place, "on the chance of getting a better living." Years had passed, and the father died, and the mother's health broke down. Then the poor widow, solely dependent on her daughter, with a boy six years of age, returned to her native place. Matty, for so the girl was called, was a tall, strong, healthy looking lass, altogether a pleasant picture to fill a young fellow's eye. Moreover, though she had "to go



out washing for her living," and in addition had to support her mother and young brother, stricter virtue and purer thought could nowhere be found than she possessed. She loved God with all her heart, and strove to do her duty faithfully. She had been brought up among pious people. She thought in her hearty, earnest way, that to be religious was to love God and Christ, to live a good life, to read her Bible, and to pray for holiness and peace.

Well, now, judge of Matty's shame, and confusion, on finding wherever and whenever she went out of doors, that Tom always followed her about. Matty's neighbours were always joking her about her "fine sweetheart," and Matty did not want a sweetheart of any sort, for in the singleness of her soul she had no thought but of her duty to her parent, and her brother. And how could they do without her—she thought—and what would become of them, if she left them? What, indeed!

The conduct of Tom grew intolerable; it was a dreadful thing for a young woman to be constantly followed about by such a companion. If she went out to work, there would be the tall, ungainly figure ever near to her; on the week evenings, when she went to meetings, going and returning, she was never left alone; on Sundays, when she went to chapel, she was sure to be accompanied by him to and from the service. Still no complaint could be made against him. But waking or sleeping, Matty's mind was so filled with the image of Tom that she was literally haunted by him night and day. The brave-hearted girl would have fallen ill, had not her sense of duty borne her up, for "was she not the support of the house?"

What was she to do? She shut herself up in the common bed-room of the house, and she asked God to help her. And He did; for all real prayer is answered in one way or another. She knew she had a great influence over Tom; he was always different to his usual wont when he followed her through the streets—softer and quieter in his manner and expression. And the blessed idea came into her mind that perhaps she might do him good, if she tried; and so in spite of what she knew would

be the false thoughts of those around her, as soon as it was dark she went out, and, as she expected, she found Tom standing by the corner of the street, waiting for her coming by, that he might follow her. With great apparent boldness, but real trembling, she went up to him and said:

"Tom, I want to speak to you; come in."

And Tom, in a strange tremor of heart, followed her into the house; and there, in the presence of her mother, she asked him the question, "Tom, why do you follow me about so? It is not right of you, you know."

Tom was really more frightened than Matty. His large, strong frame shook as if it would come to pieces. He was some time before he could speak; but at last he gasped out, "I want to have you."

Matty had expected this, and her determination was at once put into force. Laying her hand on Tom's trembling arm, she said: "If you'll be a teetotaler for a whole year, and get a regular job to do, I'll see whether I won't have you or not. But you must not come till the year end, you know."

What a change came over Tom at once on hearing this. A wild expression of joy lit up the ruggedness of his face into very grandeur. He seemed another being, as he almost shouted, "And you'll have nobody else?"

"No," was her calm answer. "Good night."

Poor Matty knelt down, and laid her head in her mother's lap, sobbing as if her brave, strong, noble heart would break. Her mother soothed her in the best way she could; and they mingled their prayers together to the widows' and the orphans' friend, and found comfort, and trust, and hope for the future.

Tom left the house of Matty with feelings of great triumph. He thought not of the time and the trials that must come between him and the realization of his wishes. Alas! he had never known what it was to think. I never could learn exactly how it came about, but Tom was that very night found in the bar-parlour, singing as he had seldom ever sung before. The very agitation of his feelings led him into greater excess



even than usual. Early next morning Tom awoke from his dreamless sleep, and the first thought that entered his mind was the promise which Matty had made him; and then followed also the recollection of the promise he had made her. He sat up on the hay on which he had slept, and then in that half-darkened room new and strange sensations swept through his mind. Gradually he grew desperately uneasy; for he thought what was he that he could have Matty? And had he not broken his promise to her the very first day he had made it? And thus for the first time in his life his real position opened up to him, and he saw himself the vagabond he was. Ah! there is a subtle connection between the affections, and the reason, and conscience. It is through them our highest understanding and clearest conceptions come, of duty and of truth. I do not say that Tom fully comprehended at once his ignorance, his wickedness, and his outcast condition, but he thought of himself in contrast with others, and especially with Matty; and he cast himself down on his hay bed, and he groaned. And then in his agony, while he was literally bathed in sweat, he thought of what Matty went to chapel for; but, alas! he had learnt to know God only by learning to curse in His name. But in the public-houses he had heard people talk about church and chapel, and how they met together there to pray to God; and so in his own wild, savage, ignorant way he spoke to this great Being.

Poor Tom had a real "agony and bloody sweat"—a real struggle of the soul! It was a breaking up of his old state of moral being. Strong as he was, he was so exhausted by this terrible mental struggle, that, at last, he swooned away. It was a mercy that he did so, or he might have gone mad. When he came to himself again, the church bells were ringing blithe music on the Sabbath air, for it was Sunday morning. Tom started up; he too would go to church like other folks, and he hastened down the ladder, which led into the stable. When he got to the bottom, however, it struck him suddenly that the people who went there were "dressed up in fine clothes," and he was ragged,

hatless, and shoeless, and then he felt himself so weak that he could scarcely stand, and he had to lean against the stable wall for support. He groaned such a groan as only the deepest anguish and the greatest agony can wring from a strong man.

The oastler, who was in the stable, hastened to Tom. Thinking he was ill, he proceeded to apply his great medicine for all kinds of evils flesh is heir to—a pot of ale—which he had got a little before for his own use; but Tom put it aside, saying:

"I am going to have no more ale."

"What!" he exclaimed, in surprise, "you're not going to be teetotal, are you?"

"Yes, I am," said Tom.

All that long autumn day, with no eye but that of the Father of all upon him, Tom spent his first serious Sunday. He was almost wild with the distraction of his mind, for he thought that Matty would learn his Saturday night's conduct, and then she would have no more to do with him; and as he contrasted her life and position with his own, he fell into yet deeper despair, and he wondered where God was, and whether He would help him to become "like other folks," and especially like Matty, for that was the highest idea he could form of what people ought to be in life and religion; and as he crouched under the wall for fear that some one should see him, or as he lay on the grass, forgetting all but himself and Matty, and their relative positions, the dreadful agony of that morning was repeated again and again. Those agonies were the birth-pains of his higher nature—those days bursting into life and power.

When evening came, weak alike from his struggles and want of food, Tom crawled upon a hay-rick, and there looking up spent the greater part of a sleepless night. He wondered whether the stars were the eyes of God, and as they looked down so calm, so kindly upon him, he wondered whether they pitied him not; and their quiet loveliness did him good, for the tumult of his heart gradually stilled, and he fell at last into a deep sleep.

For the few following weeks Tom had a hard time of it. He slept sometimes



in a hay-loft, sometimes in a field, and once or twice in a lodging-house. "But he would not go near any public-house, for he felt 'afraid of getting drunk again.'" At last, after he had earned money enough to buy himself shoes and stockings, and a little better clothing—for he had got work in the harvest-fields—Mrs. Croft persuaded her husband to go to Mr. Jobson and offer to "stand bond" for Tom, if he would give him a job. As Croft was a valuable workman, and held a good position in the foundry works, Mr. Jobson gave Tom a job as striker to one of the many blacksmiths employed on the premises. This was very fortunate for him, as winter was drawing near, and outdoor labour would be scarce, and he had not now the hay-lofts of the public-houses to go to. Thus Tom went on in his upward career.

Four or five months had passed away in these trials and struggles, when one Sunday morning I was going from my home to the Sunday-school in which I was then a teacher, and I met Tom in the road. He was so different to his former self, that I scarcely knew him. He was clean, dressed in a fustian suit; but the greatest difference was in his expression—the wildness had gone from his eyes, the slouch from his gait; he had lost, too, the attitude which once gave the impression that he was ready to spring at you—the attitude of all wild natures, whatever their first appearance might otherwise warrant. All was altered in Tom, except his huge size. I stopped and spoke to him, for I was pleased with the change. He told me that he was now a teetotaler, and that he had a regular job at the foundry, for which he got ten shillings a week, and had a promise of "a rise," and that he was paid double for his overtime.

"And do you go to any school or chapel?" I asked him.

"No," said he; "I'm not fit to go."

"Not fit!" I answered. "Nonsense," and so half in earnest and half in jest, I put my arm in his, and turning him round I pulled him along with me. And we walked through those fields where Tom had had that long Sunday's agony, when his moral nature had first woke up, and tortured him so; and I talked

to him of the great purposes of religion; how it first weaned man from all love of sin, and how then it knit his heart so close and firm to God, that in time he grew full of all love and goodness, and purity, and wisdom; and I told Tom the story of the prodigal son, and he cried like a child, and asked me to tell him it over again, and where I had heard it first.

After this time Tom was a regular attendant at our Sunday-school; and it would have done any one's heart good to see him sit, simple and childlike among the little folks, just like one of them, learning his lesson. He made rapid progress, for he got lodgings with one of our friends, who took great pains with him, and I visited him and he came to see me; and so we helped him along. And his gratitude for our little help, which was given with the cheerfulest will in the world, I am sure, was something extraordinary, and made him fret very much when he did not learn, as he thought, fast enough to repay us for our pains. He soon became a reader; and thus by the twelve months had passed away, Tom was a new man. He had already won a higher place in the foundry than he begun with; he was also a teacher in our Sunday-school, teaching the little ones, he said, that he might teach himself. He had kept both the letter and the spirit of the promise he had made to Matty, and he longed most ardently to gain her approval of what he had done. Yet as the time drew near for him to present himself before her, he actually grew afraid of having to go.

Matty, in the meantime, had gone on doing her duty in her simple, straightforward way, inwardly rejoicing, it must be acknowledged, and yet not without a tremor, when her neighbours joked her with what Tom was doing and becoming, "all for the love of her;" but they insisted he deserved the girl, and that he ought to have her.

However, one Saturday night, when the year had passed, Tom mustered courage to go to Matty's house. Would it be right in me to go tell "courting tales?" I cannot do it. Tom and Matty, like two sensible folks, settled the whole affair; and next day being



Sunday, they came to our chapel together.

Tom and Matty agreed to wait another year before they married. The year passed, and then they were married as quietly as they could be, for true love likes not to parade itself amidst show and noise. And the years rolled on, and Tom grew famous as a temperance lecturer, and as a local preacher, in the district where previously he had been notorious for his wickedness. Working-men were fond of gathering around him and listening to his homely utterances, as he told them of the benefits of temperance and the value of religion. And oh! how he would picture the glories and joys of love—the love of God for man, and the love of man for man, drawing illustrations from the every-day life of his hearers—from the workshop and the home, throwing the charm of poetry and religion over the commonest materials men are in constant contact with, till their hearts would glow, and noble thoughts and high feelings were stirred in minds and souls all unused to them. And many a poor soul who came within the sound of his voice was roused to repentance, and hope, and faith, and led to the salvation which comes of trust and prayer, and the holiness of a good life; and so he toiled on till his name grew a blessedness and a power in homes and workshops far and near, where his generous labours had brought peace, and purity, and prosperity, where before discord and drunkenness had prevailed.

But ten years after his marriage the strong body broke down. The effects of his former life, and his constant labours for the good of his fellow-men, began to tell upon him. Tom tried to live two men's lives; he thought he was strong enough for anything. He wanted to be a regular week-evening lecturer for the temperance cause, and a preacher on the Sunday, studying, as he said, while he worked, besides doing his daily work in the smiths' shop; and his endeavours were too much for him. Matty's poor old mother had gone to her rest, blessing Tom with her last breath. Her brother had grown up a fine young fellow, devoted to Tom and his sister with the strongest and most ardent love; four fine boys had come, each a new joy

and a new tie to their parents' hearts; and the future before them was bright with promise. Such were the conditions and circumstances under which he took his bed; and when the doctor told him that he must prepare to leave this world, he answered, with a smile, "God's will be done."

Three months of patient suffering passed away before I received the summons to his dying bed. He had grown to me closer and closer, as the noble qualities of his heart and mind were manifested, as a very dear and sacred friend. Superior in every advantage of education and position, I had felt for a long time how inferior I was in zeal for the good of mankind, in piety and nobleness of soul, and original powers of mind. Often had I felt the thrill of his courage strengthen my heart, and the glow of his faith raise my own into brighter and diviner life. Judge ye who have lost such a friend, then, my sorrow, even though expected, on hearing those words, "Please, sir, you are to come; Tom is nearly dead."

We sat down around his bed, in that quiet evening hour, I and his family, and the two Croft's; and we talked of scenes in each of which some poor child of ignorance and sin had been won to prayer and goodness; and there was no sadness in that chamber of death, but rather joy, when Tom spoke in such cheerful, hopeful tones of the time when his happiness would be complete, when he was surrounded by his wife, his boys, and his friends in heaven; and in the meantime, he said, he would beseech the Father continually, that while He blessed the whole world with higher blessings than man had ever previously possessed, He would grant special blessings to each of us. At last his hour of departure drew near; he shook hands, and said to all, "Be ye followers of God as dear children." Slowly, and more slowly, he breathed, until at last he was borne into the higher world; and in spite of our faith we sorrowed, for although the gain was his, to us the loss was great. O, never were Mrs. Barbauld's words more beautifully illustrated:

"Sweet is the scene when virtue dies."

\* \* \* \*



Matty is now bringing up her boys in her own brave, independent way, teaching them the highest lessons by her own life of virtue.

The lessons I learnt from the history of Tom Lost, are these: That no human being can sink so low in sin that he will be beyond the renovating power of repentance and redemption, even in this life, much less in the next, where the spirit is in more direct contact with the all-renewing spirit of God. That genuine human love is the same as divine love, both in its nature and operations. That human love is the most direct way to God's love; and that if we have the first, we are sure to win the last, in a greater or less degree.

Reader—human love is sweet in the proportion that it is sanctified by the power and more perfect love of our Heavenly Father, and only then is it safe from degeneracy and death.

WHITEFIELD. — The compiler of Whitefield's life relates an attempt of the two Erskines, and the associate Presbytery to make Mr. Whitefield subscribe the solemn league and covenant. Suppose, said Mr. W., that Independents should come and declare, that after the greatest search they were convinced that Independency was the right church government, and would disturb nobody if tolerated? No, replied these compassionate Christians. And here, very probably, ended a conference which Mr. Whitefield considered as an insult to the rights of mankind. When Mr. Erskine, to engage Mr. Whitefield to preach only for them, urged, "We are the Lord's people." "If others," replied Mr. Whitefield, "be the devil's people, they have more need to be preached to." Referring to a sermon preached by a minister of the associate Presbytery, at the close of the Conference above mentioned, Mr. Whitefield afterwards remarked, "The good man so spent himself in the former part of his sermon in talking against Prelacy, the Common Prayer Book, the surplice, the rose in the hat, and such like externals, that when he came to the latter part of his text, to invite poor sinners of Jesus Christ, his breath was so gone that he could scarce be heard."

## MAGDALENA.

WHEN a poor forsaken sister,  
Whom we name a fearful name,  
From the leprous lips which kissed her,  
Shudders back all bowed with shame;  
When her weary heart is yearning  
For the light of God's own skies,  
And far off, a dim discerning  
Of a purer morrow lies:

Do not thou who, less believing,  
Loving less hast conquered more—  
Do not thrust her backward, grieving,  
To the life she lived before!  
Do not pass her by, and whisper  
Bitter words of scorn and pain—  
Make her crisp hot heart grow crisper,  
And the hot hell burn again!

Who art thou that passest sentence  
On a bleeding human soul?  
Could'st *thou* drain full-dregged Repen-  
tance,

If no Love were in the bowl?  
Is not she—poor stricken weeper—  
Loved of Heaven alike with thee?  
Fool! thy pride hath thrust thee deeper  
Than thy sister—Pharisee!

Up among the lofty mountains,  
There the valleys too are deep;  
And we learn the depth of fountains  
By the height their waters leap:  
Aye! and hearts the weakest, lowliest,  
Crushed and crumbling on this sod,  
Beam full oft the brightest, holiest,  
In the firmament of God.

Nighest to the great calm splendour  
Of our first pure innocence,  
Is the halo, sadly tender,  
Of a poor heart's penitence.  
Wherefore, brothers, since transgression  
Shrouds each spirit like a pall,  
Is not meek and full confession  
Best and noblest for us all?

Go! and when, proud soul, thou learnest  
Thou, and I, and all are one,  
Then shall beauty, deep and earnest,  
Break upon thee like the sun,  
And the love that lights thy features  
In thy wider eyes shall be,  
Unto all God's living creatures,  
Even as it is to thee.



## A LAY SERMON.

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night."—*David*.

THE great Napoleon, in a moment of spleen and hate, once styled us in contempt "a nation of shopkeepers." It was a piece of petty criticism unworthy his great and penetrating intellect, and which, at another time, he would have been the first to disown. We are traders, and many of us are shopkeepers, and there is nothing irreconcilable with many high and noble qualities in being so; but in the sense of being entirely absorbed in business, and conducting it in a mean, sordid spirit, the accusation is utterly untrue. But were it not so, we might almost be reconciled to the stigma in view of the grand, magnificent results which, as a nation, we have been enabled to work out.

Yet taking our fellow-countrymen as they appear, we might almost be led to think that the fact was so. We see an immense amount of activity around us, and find it all takes but one direction, viz., money-getting; we hear a great deal of talk, and still the same fatal mark appears. A stranger taking a cursory and superficial view of us, might well assume that *to grow rich* was our one endeavour, and our one care.

Our *taciturnity* in matters of sentiment and experience, just as if we almost felt it to be a shame and disgrace to be detected manifesting any, is one cause of this mistake. An Englishman would sooner be found talking upon any subject than the convictions of his mind, or the feelings of his heart. But this, which we do from habit and temperament, the best and wisest of us have no wish to see altered. The truest life of the soul is, in great part, by necessity of nature, a hidden, unspoken life; and where a man babbles forth all he thinks and feels, we may rest assured that there is neither depth nor force in the inward current.

Still, there must be some huge defect in our practice, when we are so forcibly struck with such a type of character as

appears in David, the writer of these words. It seizes upon our imagination as something new, fresh, beautiful. For here is one who evidently is not always immersed in selfish and material cares, but has an inward life, of thought, affection, and character, that he infinitely prizes and assiduously cherishes. Where this inner life exists at all, albeit that so much of it is necessarily hidden and unexpressed, yet it is never wholly without outward manifestation, and in this case it appears in signs unequivocal, incontestible. No one looking at these Psalms can entertain a doubt for a moment of the reality, the force, the plenitude, the perennial freshness of the spiritual affections of the writer. And, as I have said, it is a type of character which strikes us by its contrast to our own, and is felt to be far superior.

We, as a denomination, lie under the reproach of being greatly wanting in spiritual earnestness and fervour. It is charged against us that we take up our religion, with decision indeed, but without affection and without interest. But then, the question is, what is religion? The best religion is assuredly *noble deeds*—which, seen in a man's life, the end of all rules and modes of life is answered, and the very purpose and intention of life itself accomplished; and by this test we are well content to be examined and compared with other denominations. Then again, and we are free to confess it, we have no such conceptions in our religion as call forth noisy, and violent, and demonstrative emotions. We do not believe in a God "angry with us every hour," and only to be placated by means confounding to every principle of reason and every instinct of justice. We do not believe in a curse hanging over the long-drawn history of man, and every generation of men in that history, smiting alike the new-born infant and hoary age, and, with vengeance implacable following man, in fierce and terrific shapes, into the eternal world. Such is *not*, thank God, our belief, and therefore we have no faith either in tears and groans, and agonizing fears, as the best service we can render our divine Creator. We would not be, if we could, fervent and ardent in this sense.



But though we lack such objects of faith, we assuredly have others even more stimulating to our higher nature, if not so demonstrative in their effects. A God of whom we believe that his path is alike in the trackless sea and in the softest zephyr—who rules uncontrolled in the heavens above and the earth beneath; who, best of all, is over His works, and over man's life, an ever beautiful and loving presence, and watchful and kind Providence. Surely, such a being might well command all the powers of our minds and heart in His contemplation and adoration. Divine Creator, giver of life and every good thing—sublime order, perfect wisdom, perfect love—what need we more to unlock the whole treasure-house of our best thoughts and sensibilities! We boast ourselves to possess already the august, the thrilling, the soul subduing and entrancing conception, and all we need is the fuller realization of it in our hearts, to give us all needful elevation and ardour of character and feeling. Perhaps there *is* a hardness, a coldness of nature in us Unitarians; but the softening touch is at hand in the firmer grasp, the fuller realization of our own thoughts. We only need such habits of private reflection and meditation, and worship as we discern in David.

Seasons spent in this way are never lost. They come back to us again, often at the instant, laden with treasures of thought, of instruction, of joy. David is here considering the "ways of men," and as he views man treading the "right and true" way, his soul catches the glow of a new fervour and delight. As if he had never fully realized the spectacle before, he breaks out—

"Blessed is the man that walketh not to the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the ways of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night."

What, now, is contained in this thought of his here brought before us as the fruit of a brief meditation?

It suggests

I. Blessedness as a human possibility.

This is a child's eager and undoubting faith, for each day to it is a festival of

joy. But childhood and early manhood passed, a far different witness is borne. For then, so many disappointments have already pierced his soul, so many sorrows crossed his path, so heavy a burden, and perplexing, and altogether so vain a thing seems life, that he would fain lay him down and die, but for the ties which bind him to earth, and his own great dread of the undiscovered future. The tenacity with which, at this stage of existence, we cling to life is, in the main, more physical than moral, more fear of what the future may discover, than interest or joy in the present. When old age comes, with its accumulated infirmities, by a wise and loving arrangement, we turn away from life weary, and sigh for the rest of the grave; but it is so also while yet the powers are fresh and vigorous, and although we feel the anomaly, we see no choice but in submission. Our belief in blessedness, when once we have passed early manhood, partakes rather of a despairing cry than full and perfect trust. Yet David, with a long and often sad experience of his own, still turns to life and calls it *blessed*. Its plains are cold and bare; yet, for him at least, it still blooms with the beauty, and the air is rich with the fragrance of the very flowers of Paradise itself.

And it might be well to remark how high his conception rises of the felicity possible to man. He talks not of pleasure merely—short-lived—and depending on so many chances; he stops not at happiness even, which is something purer and higher; but he sets before us *blessedness*—a pure, serene, untroubled, unfailing joy, such as we are taught the Father of our spirits reserves for his chosen children in the realms of light; or, descending lower, such as a fond mother invokes for her child, and at the same time imparts to it out of her own fond looks, and manner, and tones. And this on the earth where our own dull eyes see nothing but barrenness and thorns! But who then is thus blessed? which leads me to mention

II. The conditions of this blessedness, as conceived of by David.

They are first stated here in a *negative* form, and then in an *affirmative*. Under the former we are told—1st. That the



man that is blessed "hearkens not to the counsels of the ungodly." We do not sufficiently heed this condition. Really purposing, as we might be doing, to live a true and noble life, we are apt to think that our strength and determination of will, under God's blessing, is equal to the task. So, if men of evil lives confront us in our path, we do not think it necessary to turn aside; or if they talk with and counsel us, we never dream but we may safely listen. But in so doing, we do immense injustice to the actual, positive influence of one man over another, and we miserably underrate the power of the wiles and seductions of evil itself. It is not, for most of us, a timid cowardly virtue, but a just prudence, not to say a noble self-respect, which should lead us to avoid the society and turn from the conversation of men of lax principles and lives. Observing, indeed, the hazards to which our best and noblest virtue is exposed, how it yields and folds up its buds almost to the very death in an uncongenial atmosphere, there are some of us who would almost choose the weak and timid virtue which leans on *others' strength*, than that more daring one which, trusting to its *own*, braves all dangers and shuns no temptation. That free, open, generous confidence which we, as Unitarians boast, peculiarly exposes us to this peril, and at least it should make us watchful and vigilant, lest unawares we be beguiled into sin.

Another condition under this form is expressed in the words—"Nor standeth in the way of sinners."

The first condition is prudential mercy; but this is plainly obligatory. It is no longer a question of what is safe for us to do, but of what we are bound to do; and the one thing which gives force to the former condition, is the imperative obligation we are under to observe the second. "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the path of sinners." The paths of sin—how many and various they are! Sins of the *mind*, when, not seeing, we do not seek to see, or seeing, wish not to see and say we do not. Sins of the *heart*, as when our affections and desires are set upon inferior objects, or selfish pleasures and ends. Sins of the *temper*, as when we indulge malignant

passions, or chafe in impatience under the courses of life. Sins of the *will*, as when our aims in life are unfixed and fluctuating, or when we falter in a noble purpose because of difficulties. What a tremendous impost, and how far we sink below it, lies in the injunction—"Walk not in the paths of sinners."

The last condition under this form consists in "Not sitting in the seat of the scornful."

What a picture is this! How graphic and true to the life! For the scorner, it may be always observed, is no worker. The busy world moves on, but he just sits still and scoffs. There is much around to excite him to emulation, much to call forth his admiration, very much to call forth his pity and compassionate help, but he only turns upon the appealing vision, and every part of it, a cold, contemptuous stare. The world—man and man's life—God, eternity—these he would have us believe are all huge mistakes, and his discerning eye has been the first to discover it. But himself, as he must feel, the hugest mistake, at least the happiness lost to others, can never be his. By very reason of his own awakening to the hollownesses and falsities of life, his own existence must be, or should be, the most rayless and joyless of any. No; if we would be blessed, we must not indeed "sit in the seat of the scornful." Some little confidence in our fellow-men is indispensable to our entering upon any measure of pleasurable companionship with them; and some measure at least of happy, cheerful trust—in God, in God's wisdom and favour, in life as capable of being carried out to high and happy issues, in something real and true *somewhere*, yonder if not here—is as indispensable here, unless we are willing to renounce all hope of blessedness whatsoever.

But these are all, in a measure, *merely* negative conditions corresponding with the form in which they are expressed—so next we are taken to an affirmative one—a genuine *doing* something, and not merely avoiding—and it is such a one as not only provides for all the rest, but gives them a glory, and imparts to them a reality, which in themselves they lack. For the man, we are told, that is



blessed, not only avoids what is evil, but delights in the right, and meditates constantly thereupon. "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law he meditates day and night." Ah! that is the true secret of happy work of all kinds—delight in it. So, a merely mechanical righteousness, a righteousness of merely formal acts, though the highest, will not avail us for blessedness, but only a deep, true, pure love and reverence for the right and true. And one means, perhaps the only means of getting this, is the more frequent meditation of the subject, such as is pointed out here as also a sign and token of our interest therein.

Here, then, are the conditions, as conceived of by David, of true human blessedness. Perchance, were we to test them for themselves—test them in their entirety and with an honest faithfulness—we should find them to be what David affirms of them; and in them happiness, but with a loftier intelligence and higher powers of appreciation and gratitude, that happy time which, with youth, we feared had passed utterly away.

J. S., *Halifax.*

### THE MODEL YOUNG WOMAN.

1. THE model young woman *takes care of her health* by a proper observance of the laws of health in all ways, but especially with regard to diet, dress, and exercise. Her diet is simple and sparing. Her dress is so constructed as to keep her person warm—especially the lower extremities—and not to impede locomotion. She exercises frequently in the open air, thus bringing the flush of health to her cheek, and sending healthy life-blood, unhindered by tight lacing, to every part of her system.

2. She is *modest*. Modest is "synonymous with chastity, or purity of manners." There is such a thing as affected modesty sometimes seen among women; but wherever this is witnessed, it is the sure evidence that the genuine article is missing, for it is always unaffected and natural. "Unaffected modesty is the sweetest charm of female excellence, the richest gem in the diadem of their honour." Modesty is natural to woman,

and may be preserved by cultivating only the sweetest and purest thoughts.

3. She has good taste. Taste is nice perception, or the power of perceiving and relishing excellence in human performances; it is the faculty of discerning beauty, order, congruity, proportion, symmetry, or whatever constitutes excellence. It is not altogether natural, nor is it entirely acquired, but it may be cultivated highly.

Good taste will manifest itself in the dress, and conversation, and general appearance; and will regulate all her intercourse with others, especially those of the opposite sex. It will abash the vulgar and impure, and encourage and strengthen the good. Modesty and taste will build around the possessor a strong tower of defence.

4. She is intelligent. She acquires intelligence in all suitable ways, especially by observation, reading, and conversation. She looks upon the world around her as a great volume of facts wrought out by the Almighty Artificer, and proper for her to study; and in the tiny leaflet or the granite boulder, she sees the work of God, and endeavours to understand it. She reads good books carefully, and tries to make the facts and ideas contained therein her own. Her conversation is with the wise and good, and in it she is getting or giving truth. She knows but little about that which is called "small talk," and never practices it—such food is too frothy for her intellectual appetite.

5. She is emotional. As a well-tuned harp will answer quickly and accurately the finest and most delicate touch of the player, so her heart feels deeply and acutely. The recital of the sorrows of another finds an answering chord in her heart, that echoes responsively the bitter wail. And the sight or sound of joy in others makes her heart leap, as leaps the bird which, rising from its lowly nest toward heaven, sings with quivering melody its song of praise and gladness.

6. She is self-sacrificing. She is always ready to make sacrifices of her time, or labour, or anything she can, for the good of those in whom she feels an interest. And this is no mark of weakness in her, but it is noble. Christ manifested the same spirit, and it is one of the noble traits in his character.



7. She is affectionate. She loves every loveable thing. Love is the mainspring of her actions. She labours for those whom she loves, because she loves them; and such is the intensity of her love, that no sacrifice can be demanded so great that she will not make it for them.

8. She is pious. Her soul is the abode of her Saviour. In the light of religion she walks as if treading upon a rock. Here she acquires her decision and strength to deny herself, and refuse to do wrong with as much firmness as she would do right, with cheerfulness. This is the keystone to the arch of her character, supporting and beautifying the whole—the crown of light and purity surrounding all the rest, and sitting there as the cloven tongues sat upon the disciples at the pentecostal baptism. The hinderances to the formation of such a character are, bad company, bad books, and bad habits. Eschew these and take firm hold of their opposites, and any young woman of ordinary cultivation and under any ordinary circumstances can form and maintain the very character I have described above. Young woman, give this subject thought. — D. C. WRIGHT.

### I MUST DO MORE FOR MY MOTHER.

"IS THERE any vacant place in this bank which I could fill?" was the inquiry of a boy, as with a glowing cheek he stood before the manager.

"There is none," was the reply. "Were you told that you might obtain a situation here? Who recommended you?"

"No one recommended me, sir," calmly answered the boy. "I only thought I would see."

There was a straightforwardness in the manner and honest determination in the countenance of the lad, which pleased the man of business and induced him to continue the conversation. He said:

"You must have friends who would aid you in obtaining a situation. Have you advised with them?"

The quick flash of the deep blue eyes was quenched in the overtaking wave of sadness as he said, though half musingly:

"My mother said it would be useless to try without friends." Then recollecting himself, he apologized for the interruption, and was about to withdraw, when the gentleman detained him by asking why he did not remain a year or two longer at school, and then enter the business world.

"I have no time," was the instant reply; "but I study at home, and keep up with the other boys."

"Then you have a place already," said his interrogator; "why did you leave it?"

"I have not left it," answered the boy quietly.

"Yes, but you wish to leave it; what is the matter?"

For an instant the child hesitated, then he replied with a half-reluctant frankness, "I must do more for my mother."

Brave words! Talisman of success anywhere and everywhere. They sank into the heart of the listener, recalling the radiant past. Grasping the hand of the astonished boy, he said, with a quivering voice:

"My good boy, what is your name? You shall fill the first vacancy for an apprentice that occurs in the bank. If, in the meantime, you want a friend, come to me. But now give me your confidence. Why do you want more for your mother? Have you no father?"

Tears filled his eyes as he replied: "My father is dead; my brother and sister are dead; and mother and I are left alone to help each other. But she is not strong, and I want to take care of her. It will please her, sir, that you have been so kind, and I am obliged to you."

So saying, the boy left, little dreaming that his own nobleness of character had been as a bright glance of sunshine into that busy world he had so tremblingly entered.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.—"The Monthly Messenger," of the Swindon Free Christian Church and Schools.—1d. Morris, Swindon. "The Christianity of Christ" the religion of the Unitarians, by a Layman.—6d. Whitfield, London. "A Sermon on Christian Liberty," its extent and limitation, by the Rev. W. Brice, Belfast. "The Kingdom of Christ not a temporal Kingdom."—Ward, London.



## CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

BY SAMUEL CHARLESWORTH.

IN this Christian England of ours, and in this vaunted age of enlightenment and philanthropy, it is still accounted a legal and righteous thing to hang men on a beam in broad daylight, before assembled crowds; and the deed is justified by ministers of the gospel. To my mind (for, thank God, my eyes never witnessed such a barbarity) the spectacle presents itself as a foul blot upon our civilisation, a libel upon our Christianity, a needless outrage upon our common humanity. And I regret to believe that public opinion in favour of the abolition of such horrors has made little advance during the last few years. The abolitionists of death penalties, it must be confessed, have not recently made much headway; and the prejudices in favour of their retention are still so potent, that one dares not predict an early approach of the day when the gallows shall be finally consigned to the limbo of history.

As a matter of debate, the question has been exhausted long ago. The argument theological, statistical, and rational was pretty completely worked out in three ably-reasoned articles which appeared in the *Eclectic Review* in 1848 and 1849. Mere reasoning, however, has done little to influence either the legislative or the public opinion of this country in favour of abolition. Without reiterating arguments which have already been put so forcibly, I propose to take a brief review of the prejudices and fallacies which retain the death penalty in our legal code, despite all which reason and experience would long ago have taught us on the subject, if we would listen to their voice.

The retention of capital punishment in this country is traceable, in no slight degree, to the existence of a fallacious misconception in the public mind respecting crime in general; and with the appliances of our existing civilisation, it is not difficult to account for its existence. Our invaluable newspaper press, for instance, has much to do with fostering a public feeling against all relaxations whatsoever in the severity of legal penalties. Not directly, but incidentally, as may readily be shown. There exists a dim, floating idea in the public mind that crime is on the increase—both in quantity and atrocity. Statistics and history completely disprove the supposition; yet the notion exists. Thanks to the press, the world never heard and knew so much about its crimes as it does in the present day; and it mistakes the multiplication of details for the multiplication of offences. Probably it is too true that murders, equally ferocious and cool-blooded with any of our own times, have been perpetrated in all ages; but the immense multiplication of newspapers and newspaper readers in the present day, causes a much more distinct and vivid impression of these brutalities to exist in the public mind. As civilisation advances, and society becomes more complex and artificial in its construction, crime will become a more artistic thing; but, on the other hand, society will gain increased certainty and facility in its detection. The elec-

tric telegraph, with the rapidity of the lightning of heaven, pursues the murderer and overtakes his fancied lair of security and concealment almost before he has himself arrived thither. Every one will remember that the female accomplice in the murder of a man named O'Connor, at Bermondsey, a few years ago, had started by train to Edinburgh, when this swift messenger of justice was at once put in requisition to communicate the fact to the police of that city; and she was arrested in her lodgings while in the very act of reading in the newspapers the account of her own blood-red deeds. Science, too, with argus eye, detects unmistakable evidence of the poisoner's deeds; and he less surely escapes the bar of human judgment. Now, this increased facility and certainty in detection causes many misdeeds to be brought to light, of which the general community would otherwise have had no knowledge; whilst the industry and efficiency of the newspapers familiarise the public ear with details not only of murders, but of almost every other offence under the sun. I repeat that the consequence of all this is, that *we know and hear a great deal more about crimes and criminals* than ever we did. Hence arises a vague but false misconception in the public mind that crime is an increasing evil in our midst; and this fallacious notion is a powerful obstacle to the growth of any feeling in favour of relaxing legal penalties. This unfounded misconception has done, and will do, far more to prolong the existence of the gallows as an English "institution," than the arguments of its stoutest defenders, in their most formidable array. If the multiplication of newspapers enlighten public opinion on almost every other subject, herein is one of the few instances in which their very numbers, and efficiency as organs of public intelligence, have an indirect effect in fostering our prejudices and blinding our judgment.

The retention of capital punishments in this country may be partly accounted for by the existence of this fallacious notion in the public mind respecting crime in general; but there are certain other misconceptions which particularly regard the crime of murder. They are—firstly, that the crime of a murderer is one of peculiar atrocity, and merits in an especial manner both divine and human vengeance; secondly, that to punish the murderer with the death penalty has the warrant of Holy Writ; and thirdly, that penalties repress crime in exact proportion to their severity. This latter fallacy has long pervaded the administration of justice in this country; but the very successful application in the past few years of the reformatory and preventive processes, more particularly in connection with our juvenile offenders, has thrown new light upon the fallacy, and perhaps we may hope to hear less and less of it in the future. These fallacious misconceptions have so powerful a hold upon the public, and even upon the legislative and judicial mind, that it need not surprise us to see the abolitionist feeling making such remarkably slow progress. Of these fallacies, the first two are, perhaps, the most active and potent in their influence;—all history bears witness, indeed, that religious opinions, or supposed religious



sanctions, having deep root in human nature, have ever tardily yielded to innovation and change.

Let us mark the effect which a shocking murder usually produces in the public mind. We instantly revolt with horror from the perpetrator of so foul a stain upon our common nature, and shrink from him instinctively as from a moral pestilence. Actuated almost solely by impulse, we are liable to be thrown off our guard at such moments in judging the murderer and decreeing his punishment. Because we are horrified at the murder, no fate can be too horrible for the murderer; and having felt ourselves justified in visiting him with blood for blood, we are apt to conclude that we have done all we can to repress the prevalence of his crime. We mistake retribution for prevention. It is in calmer moments, when indignation has had its vent, that we must ask ourselves the question—whether hanging the offender forms the best means of preventing the recurrence of similar tragedies?—Are we quite sure that in so doing we are not enacting a barbarity which is useless, and perhaps worse than useless—positively injurious? A shocking murder is a barbarous outrage upon our feelings; but is it not a greater barbarity to hang the murderer in cool blood, unless it can be demonstrably proved that there is a peculiar and stern necessity for the deed? I am not going to dispute the right of society to take the life of the murderer if it can be proved that it is requisite for its own security. Society has a right to protect itself. But I think very few persons, in their moments of calm reflection, really believe that an effective means of preventing, and deterring from, crime has been taken when a murderer has been executed. Any man who allows himself reflection on the subject, must feel a very solemn responsibility in sanctioning the deed. We have been accustomed to satisfy these misgivings of conscience by a kind of traditionary idea that in taking away the life of the murderer we have been most meritoriously engaged in executing Divine vengeance; or, to phrase it otherwise, satisfying the behests of eternal justice. But do we never consider that it is little short of blasphemy when we thus affect to put ourselves in the Judgment Seat of that Eternal One to whom alone it is given to judge the hearts of men, and pronounce decrees of righteous award? The intrinsic demerit of any offence whatever can be judged only by Him who seeth in secret, and knoweth the peculiar temptations to which the criminal has been subjected. Man may know the particular temptation under which a weaker brother has fallen; but God alone can know the temptations which that weaker brother had resisted *before* he fell; and hence God alone can judge the intrinsic demerit of his crime. We have a right to deal with offences and criminals in so far as they affect the well-being of society; but we have *no* right to judge the merits of the criminal in the eyes of his Maker. It is surely impious to arrogate the jurisdiction of the Most High, and assume to execute the decrees of Divine justice and chastisement. Yet this is really what those persons do who argue in defence of capital pun-

ishments on the ground that they interpret divine vengeance on the guilt of the murderer.

Such reasoners generally appeal to "the law and to the testimony" of Scripture for their justification. Persons have fancied they have found a defence of capital punishments in certain passages of the Old Scriptures relating to the antediluvian period, or to the patriarchal or Mosaic dispensations. They adduce these passages to defend, not the *expediency* but the *rightfulness* of such penalties. Having already admitted their rightfulness, if society need them for its safety and protection, I am relieved altogether in this essay from the necessity of going into the Scriptural argument. One word only do I offer on the text (Genesis ix. 6) which is always flung at the heads of the abolitionists:—"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." As one privileged to live under the gospel dispensation of grace, I deny that either the Noachic or Mosaic law is binding upon Christians. I disdain also to argue any important question upon the interpretation of a single text of Scripture.

In religion,

What awful error but some sober brow  
Will bless it and approve it with a text,  
Hiding its grossness with fair ornament?

But when this text is persistently quoted, it is only replying to such an argument after its own kind, to make the following remark. If the text is to be regarded as an explicit divine command,—and not a mere prediction or sentiment, as many scholars affirm\*,—it is certainly remarkable that *there is not a single instance recorded in the Bible in which the alleged command was enforced.* The Bible records many cases of murder; but "*in no instance is the penalty of death for the crime inflicted, or even mentioned, which seems unaccountably strange if the law existed.* We may name, amongst others, the slaughter of the Shechemites by the sons of Jacob, the murder of the Egyptian by Moses, the killing of Sisera by Jael, the treacherous destruction of Uriah by David, and the shedding of innocent blood by Manasseh. In all these cases there is the 'shedding of man's blood,' but in none of them is 'man's blood shed' in return. \* \* \* Cain was the first murderer, and therefore the worst. One naturally supposes, then, that had the Almighty intended to have established, once and for ever, the principle of 'blood for blood,' he would have done

\* A commentator to whom Dr. Franklin alludes, in his "Inquiry upon Public Punishments," gives a natural and rational exposition of this passage. "To me," he says, "I must confess it appears to contain nothing more than a declaration of what will generally happen; and in this view, to stand exactly upon the same ground with such passages as the following:—'He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity.' He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword' (Revelations xiii. 10). The form of expression is precisely the same in each of these texts; why, then, may they not be all interpreted in the same manner, and considered—not as commands, but as denunciations? And if so, the magistrate will no more be bound by the text in Genesis to punish murder with death, than he will, by the text in the Revelations, to sell every Guinea captain to our West India planters."



so here. The first murderer should have been the first example. But God visited him with quite another kind of penalty. He preserved him from destruction; he made it a crime to kill him; and he branded him, that men might know him for a murderer, and be deterred by his example from his crime."—(*Eclectic Review*, April, 1848.

Isolated texts of Scripture are something like Swiss soldiers; you can get almost any quantity of them to fight on any side of any question. A regiment of these texts is at this moment doing duty across the Atlantic in defence of the abominable institution of slavery; and when one turns to the page of history, and learns how many other iniquities under the sun have been defended by that letter of Scripture which killeth, I humbly and reverently seek rather to interpret the spirit which maketh alive. I do not admit or believe that capital punishments can be defended from Holy Scripture; but without entering into a casuistical examination of passages in the Old Testament, in the interpretation of which scholars so notoriously and widely differ, I am (with a royal author of our own day) content to appeal, in my advocacy of the abolition of capital punishment, to the spirit of Christianity. Assuredly not in the letter or spirit of Christ's own teachings; is to be found any defence of a system of jurisprudence which includes homicide among its penalties.

*To be continued.*

### CHRIST PREACHING TO THE SPIRITS IN PRISON.

"Christ being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; who sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, wherein a few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water."—1 PETER iii. 18, 20.

SOME endeavour to construe the language of this passage, so as to make it mean that the divine Spirit, the Christ Spirit, preached through Noah to the antediluvians, before the flood. Others endeavour to make it mean, that the same spirit which restored Christ to life after his crucifixion, preached the gospel to the Gentiles, through the apostles. This class of expositors endeavour to make it appear that the meaning of the apostle Peter is, that the Gentiles or Pagans, to whom the apostles preached, were "*such persons* as were disobedient and hard to be convinced in the days of Noah," and that they were in the metaphorical prison of ignorance, unbelief, sin, moral darkness and degradation.

We agree entirely with this idea of the metaphorical usage of the term "prison," though we cannot subscribe to the notion that these persons were living here in the flesh at the time that Christ preached to them. We can but regard both the constructions of this passage, above alluded to, as being a forced, unnatural exegesis

of the language of the apostle. In short, it is not what the apostle said or wrote. We allow that the word "prison" is here used in a tropical or figurative sense. The figure employed is a metaphor; but this is the only figurative word in the passage. All the passage, except this word, is literal, clear, and plain—can be easily understood.

1.—The apostle here declares that Christ was "put to death in the flesh." He was crucified, dead, and buried.

2.—He was quickened or restored to life by the Spirit.

3.—He went, being quickened by the Spirit, and preached to the spirits in prison; and this inference seems to us unavoidable, that this preaching was done after he was quickened by the Spirit or restored to life, *i.e.*, after his resurrection.

4.—The apostle informs us who these spirits were. He does not say they were "*such*," or "*like*" the men of Noah's time; but they were the identical individuals who were disobedient when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, and "*while the ark was a preparing*," or while the ark was being prepared, *i.e.*, the persons who lived just before the flood."

5.—Christ went and preached to the spirits of the antediluvians, *after* he was made alive from the dead,—not between the time of his death and his resurrection, as the Roman Catholics do vainly teach.

It seems to us, that the above five propositions are clearly stated in the text which we have placed at the head of this article. In the fourth chapter of this epistle, the apostle adds, "Who shall give an account to him that is ready to judge the living and the dead. For this cause was the gospel preached also to them who are dead, that they might be judged according to [or the same as] men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit."—1 Peter iv. 5, 6.

It would seem that "the way into the holiest of all" had not been opened unto any human being previous to the reign of Christ. He first ascended into heaven, and the elevation of man to a heaven of perfection is what constitutes the resurrection of the human race. Neither David, nor Moses and Elias had ascended into heaven, or into the highest state to which men are destined, previous to the ascension of Christ: still all the old Patriarchs and Prophets were really in the enjoyment of a conscious existence all this time, though they had not yet been raised or exalted to the highest heaven, until Christ first opened the gates thereof, entered there himself, and ever since that time has been engaged "in drawing all men unto himself." To us it seems very evident that there is a state intermediate between the moral and spiritual state we are in at death, and the highest or perfect state to which we are destined, and are to be fitted for by the mission of the Saviour.—*Christian Repository.*



## SOCIAL INTERCOURSE.

THERE is a false necessity with which we industriously surround ourselves: a circle that never expands; whose iron never changes to ductile gold. This is the presence of public opinion, the intolerable restraint of conventional forms. Under this despotic influence, men and women check their best impulses, suppress their highest thoughts. Each longs for the full communion with other souls, but dares not give utterance to its yearnings. What hinders? The fear of what Mrs. Smith or Mrs. Clark will say; or the frown of some sect; or the anathema of some synod; or the fashion of some clique; or the laugh of some club; or the misrepresentation of some political party. Thou art afraid of thy neighbour, and knowest not that he is equally afraid of thee. He has bound thy hands and thou hast fettered his feet. It were wiser for both to snap the imaginary bond, and walk onward unshackled. If thy heart yearns for love, be loving; if thou wouldst have a brother frank to thee, be frank with him.

But what will people say?

What does it concern thee what they say?—thy life is not in their hands. They can give thee nothing of real value, nor take from thee anything that is worth having. Satan may promise thee all the kingdoms of the earth, but he has not one acre of it to give. He may offer much as the price of his worship, but there is a flaw in all his title-deeds. Eternal and sure is the promise. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

But I shall be misunderstood—misrepresented.

And what if thou art? They who throw stones at what is above them, receive missiles back again by the law of gravity; and lucky are they who bruise not their own faces. Would that I could persuade all who read this to be truthful and free to say what they think, and act what they feel, to cast from them like ropes of sand all fears of sect and parties, of clans and classes.

What is there of joyful freedom in our social intercourse? We meet to see each other, and not a peep do we get under the thick stifling veil which each carries about. We visit to enjoy ourselves, and our host takes away all our freedom, while we destroy his own. If the host wishes to walk or ride, he dares not, lest it seem impolite to the guests; if the guest wishes to read or sleep, he dares not, lest it seem impolite to the host: so they remain slaves, and feel it a relief to part company. A few individuals, mostly in foreign lands, arrange this matter with wiser freedom. If a visitor arrives, they say, "I am very busy to-day; if you wish to ride, there are horses and saddles in the stables; if you wish to read, there are books in the parlour; if you want to work, the men are raking hay in the field; if you want to romp, the children are at play in the court; if you want to talk to me, I can be with you at such an hour. Go where you please, and while you are here do as you please."

At some houses in Florence, large parties meet

without the slightest preparation. It is understood that on some particular evening of the week a lady or a gentleman always receives friends. In one room are books and flowers; in another pictures and engravings; in a third, music. Couples are ensconced in some shaded alcove, or groups dotted about the room, in mirthful or serious conversation. No one is required to speak to his host, either entering or departing. Lemonade and baskets of fruit stand here and there on the side tables, that all may take who like; but eating, which constitutes so large a part of entertainments, is a slight and almost unnoticed incident in these festivals of intellect and taste. Wouldst thou like to see such social freedom introduced here? Then do it. But the first step must be complete indifference to Mrs. Smith's assertions that you were mean enough to offer only one kind of cake to your company, and to put less shortening in the undercrust of your pies than the upper. Let Mrs. Smith talk according to her gifts; be thou assured that all living souls love freedom better than cakes or undercrust.—*Mrs. Child.*

## THE LITTLE HAT.

BY MATILDA W. BEALE.

'Tis but a common and cheap straw hat,  
With ribbons of faded blue,  
And the total cost of it only was  
Two dimes and a half, when new.

With my slender purse I could not buy  
For the darling boy of mine  
A hat of silk and laces made,  
Trimmed with flowers and feathers fine.

Yet I thought this unpretending hat  
Looked very well on him,  
With his "lint-white" curls peeping softly out  
From underneath the brim.

The "old, old story," old as time,  
Yet ever newly told:  
The garments are left—the forms they wrapped  
Are lying beneath the mold!

It matters not, whether fine or coarse—  
All children's clothes I see,  
For the sake of him now robed in white,  
Are sanctified to me.

I never see little children at play  
But my heart grows big with grief,  
And aches for the one now passed away,  
Whose playtime here was so brief!

Oh! I never see a little boy  
With locks of hair lint-white,  
But I weep for one whose blue eyes closed  
For ever one Summer night.

I never see little hands and feet  
Bare, busy, brown and tough,  
But I think, "So once were my little boy's,  
Now they're white and still enough!"

And so this soiled and half-worn hat  
More precious is to me  
Than the costliest one, not worn by him,  
Could ever, ever be.



## WAYSIDE GATHERINGS.

**A TITLE.**—An independent man can see nothing to venerate or respect in a title, when it is but the nickname of a fool.

**SMOKING.**—A boy fills his pipe, *he* sees only the tobacco, but *I* see going into that pipe *brain, books, time, health, money, prospects.* The pipe is filled at last, and a light is struck; and things which are priceless are carelessly puffed away in smoke.

**LIFE'S GREAT NEED.**—Jordon, one of the free-thinking friends of the Great Frederic, writes to him thus during his last illness: "My complaint increases so much that I no longer even hope to recover from it. I feel strongly, in my present situation, the necessity of an enlightened religion arising from conviction. Without that, we are the beings upon the earth the most to be pitied."

**WELL SAID.**—Said an infidel lady once to Lord Chesterfield, "The British Parliament consists of five or six hundred of the best informed men in the kingdom. What, then, can be the reason they tolerate such an absurdity as the Christian religion?" "I suppose," replied his lordship, "it is because they have not been able to substitute anything better in its stead; when they can, I do not doubt that, in their wisdom, they will readily adopt it." And Lord Chesterfield, with all his sayings, never said a better thing.

**A SCRIPTURAL SUM.**—The text for the following Scriptural sum may be found in 2 Peter i. 5, 8. If our young readers would get the answer they must work out the problem. It is as follows:—

Add to your faith, virtue;  
And to your virtue, knowledge;  
And to your knowledge, temperance;  
And to your temperance, patience;  
And to patience, godliness;  
And to godliness, brotherly kindness;  
And to brotherly kindness, charity.

**The Answer.**—For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

**PRESENCE OF MIND IN A LITTLE BOY.**—A gentleman, while passing through a street inhabited by poor people, heard an infantile voice from a basement, crying, "Help! help!" He rushed in, and found a little five-years-old boy holding a bed-blanket around his little sister, two years younger, who had caught her clothes on fire; and the little hero had succeeded in extinguishing the flames. The boy in answer to the question why he wrapped the bed-blanket around his sister's burning clothes, said his ma had told him that was the best way to put out fire; and as to why he halloed "Help! help!" that he was afraid he could not succeed, and wanted some one to help him. He was then asked why he did not leave his sister, and run into the street, and cry for help. He answered, with tears in his eyes, and a fixed determination of countenance, "No, I never would have left her. She was my sister. Had she burned up, I would have burned too."

**A WISE SAYING.**—An English farmer recently remarked that "he fed his land before it was hungry, rested it before it was weary, and weeded it before it was foul." We have seldom, if ever, seen so much agricultural wisdom condensed into a single sentence.

**GREAT TRUTH IN A SMALL PARAGRAPH.**—One secret of the practical failure in after life of so many promising young persons is, I apprehend, that they did not learn that a man's capacity and success in the world is estimated, not by what we can do, but what he does do. The opposite heresy is, I am sorry to believe, early imbibed in most of our seminaries of learning. How the youth of genius, real or supposed, is worshipped by his associates, and too often by society also, while the more diligent plodder is left in neglect to "work out his own salvation, as he almost infallibly does!

**TRIALS NEEDED TO PURIFICATION.**—"I remember," says Whitfield, "some years ago, when I was at Shields, I went into a glass-house; and, standing very attentive, I saw several masses of burning glass, of various forms. The workmen took a piece of glass and put it into one furnace, then he put it into a second, and then into a third. I said to him, 'Why do you put this through so many fires?' He answered, 'Oh, sir, the first was not hot enough, nor the second, and therefore we put it into a third, and that will make it transparent.'" This furnished Mr. Whitfield with a useful hint, that we must be tried and exercised with many fires, until our dross be purged away, and we are made fit for the owner's use.

**THE LAND OF CONTRARIES.**—In Australia the north is the hot wind, and the south the cool; the westerly the most unhealthy, the east the most salubrious. It is summer with the colonists when it is winter at home, and the barometer is considered to rise before bad weather, and fall before good. The swans are black, and the eagles are white; the mole lays eggs, and has a duck's bill; the kangaroo (an animal between the deer and the squirrel) has five claws on his fore paws, three talons on his hind legs, like a bird, and yet hops on its tail. There is a bird (melliphaga) which has a broom in its mouth instead of a tongue; a fish, one-half belonging to the genus *raja*, and the other to that of *squalus*. The cod is found in the rivers, and the perch in the sea; the valleys are cold, and the mountain-tops warm. The nettle is a lofty tree, and the poplar a dwarfish shrub; the pears are of wood, with the stalks at the broad end; the cherry grows with the stone outside. The fields are fenced with mahogany; the humblest house is fitted up with cedar, and the myrtle plants are burnt for fuel. The trees are without fruit, their flowers without scent, and birds without song. Such is the land of Australia.

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